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From the Editor...

Welcome to the latest, auction-shortened, installment of the *NI Bulletin*. I'd like to welcome a new author to this issue, Grant Betts, with a very interesting article on a particular medal within the extensive Napoleonic Series. In addition, we have an in-depth lot description from a recently auctioned Eid Mar Aureus – a classic in ancient Roman numismatics, a book review for a new title on the late nineteenth century copper trade coinage of Muscat & Oman, and the next installment of John Stich's Twelve Caesars article. Your editor also could not resist including an image and lot description for a recently auctioned proof Una and the Lion Five Sovereign piece – an issue that I consider one of the most beautiful coins ever struck; I still remember seeing one at the British Museum in London as a teenager and being simply mesmerized by it.

Again, I extend an earnest request to authors – or would-be authors – to submit material for publication in the *NI Bulletin*; my email address can be found on the inside cover of this volume. One additional short article for our last issue of the year would be helpful, in addition to needing submissions for the first issue of 2023. I do have untold pages of material on the medals of Jacques Wiener that I can tap into and wax poetic if needed, but I suspect that might get somewhat tiresome for most readers if that became a regular feature... So, if you have an idea, a draft, a finished article – or anything in-between, please consider submitting it for a future issue of our *Bulletin*.

MR

**A Much-Misunderstood Medal:
Princess Elisa Baciocchi's 'Montone' Medal (1811) by André Galle.
Grant Andrew Betts, NI #2848**

Napoleon Bonaparte's astonishing military and political success led to his coronation as Emperor of the French in 1804, and as King of Italy in 1805. By the zenith of his power in 1812, Napoleon's conquests and the territorial expansion of the First French Empire made him 'Master of Europe.' During his career, and even after Napoleon's final abdication (1815) and death (1821), a vast number of medals, jetons, decorations, clichés, and repousées featuring Napoleon and all aspects of his Empire and its aftermath were engraved and minted. Apart from the inherent beauty and value of many of them as numismatic art objects, as a series they also constitute an invaluable documentary record of this tumultuous, consequential, and formative period of modern European history.

This series of over 2,300 individual works of numismatic art is often referred to for brevity as the *Napoleonic Series of Medals* and can be found documented in the classic catalogues of Bramsen (1904, 1907, 1913), Julius (1932), Essling (1927), Hennin (1826), Millin & Millingen (1819, 1821), and Fellmann (*Trésor de Numismatique* 1836, 1840).¹ Many of these medals have been the subject of meticulous documentation and perspicacious scholarship; however, on occasion the numismatist will find a medal in the *Napoleonic Series* that has been incorrectly documented and poorly understood, or even completely mistaken as to its original purpose or intent. One such medal is the 'Montone' medal (Figure 1).



Figure 1 The 'Montone' Medal by André Galle (1811). AE, 36 mm. Bramsen 1139; Julius 2482; TN 52, 7. (Image courtesy of Museums Victoria, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au>)

¹ David Block's (1985) article, 'Books about Napoleonic Medals' in the *Numismatics International Bulletin* (NIB) provides a concise description, history and analysis of the *Napoleonic Series* catalogues. For an excellent introduction to the *Napoleonic Series of Medals* themselves, see David Block's series of articles in NIB, beginning with 'Napoleonic Medals: The Egyptian Campaign' (1987).

The ‘Montone’ medal carries on its obverse André Galle’s fine portrait of Napoleon’s sister Elisa, Princess of Lucca and Piombino (1805-1814) and Grand Duchess of Tuscany (1809-1814). On its reverse is a memorial column inscribed with both Elisa’s name and that of her husband Felix (Felice Pasquale Baciocchi). A moment’s reflection on the reverse perimeter legend “AVGVSTAE – CONDITRICI” and exergue legend “INCOLAE - PAGI · MONTIONIS · ELISAEI · A · MDCCCXI” confirms that this medal was commissioned by the inhabitants of ‘Montone’ to laud Elisa as the ‘founder’ of their town.² It is curious, therefore, that modern numismatists interested in the *Napoleonic Series of Medals* continue to incorrectly describe the intent of the ‘Montone’ medal as commemorating the construction of an important new road by the Princess Elisa.

Fellmann’s 1840 *Trésor (Napoleon)* offers a complete description of the medal, translated here to English:

[Pl 52] N° 7.

31 December 1811.

Medal.

Elisa-Imp · Soror. Rev. Avgvstae-Conditricti.

ELISA - IMP · (*Imperatoris*) SOROR · LVCAE - ET · POPVLON · D · (*Populoniae Dux.*) (*Élisa, sister of the Emperor, Duchess of Lucca and Piombino*). Head, to the right. Below: GALLE F. (*Fecit*).

Rev. AVGVSTAE - CONDITRICI. (*To the August Founder*). In the field, a column on which we read: MONT - ELIS - ET FEL - (*Montone - Élisa and Félix*). Exergue: INCOLAE - PAGI · MONTIONIS · ELISAEI · A · (*Anno*) MDCCCXI. (*To Élisa the inhabitants of the village of Montone, Year 1811.*) [36^{mm}.]

The head of the obverse was previously used for a medal that we published Plate XXXV, N° 9, page 77.

The Origin of the Error

The misattribution of the ‘Montone’ medal’s intent, at least in the English and French numismatic literature, began shortly after the demise of the Napoleonic Empire with the publication of the classic catalogue of Millin & Millingen (1819), who misidentify both the town and the event referred to, as well as give an incorrect date: “...*Elisa Duchess of Lucca and Piombino, by the inhabitants of Montone, a small town near Carrare [sic], on the opening [off] a new road in 1809...*”³ This was followed shortly afterwards with a work by Scargill (1820), whose scholarship is known to be untrustworthy, and who completely misunderstands the medal, stating that the reverse represents “...*a mile stone shaped like those of the Romans in reference to the road which this Princess opened from Lucca to Pisa...*” Later numismatists, such as Fellmann (1840) and Reichel (1842) merely repeat these errors, while those who have

² The Latin inscription ‘Augustae Conditricti’ recalls the inscription encountered on the coins of Emperor Hadrian, ‘Romulo Conditori’ (i.e., ‘To Romulus the Founder’), implying that Elisa had rejuvenated the village of Montone, just as Hadrian had rejuvenated the City of Rome.

³ The ‘Montone’ referred to on this medal is actually over 150 km from Carrara.

become authoritative, like Bramsen (1907) and Julius (1932) maintain a diplomatic silence.

The Italian numismatist Domenico Massagli (1870) is the first to correctly locate the true ‘Montone’ referenced by the medal (Figure 2), and provide the medal’s correct interpretation in his *Leads, Seals, and Medals belonging to the History of Lucca*:

The land of Montione [sic: modern spelling *Montioni*], located in the former principality of Piombino, was well known since the 14th century for its abundant mines of Alume di Massetano, from which it drew all its greatest wealth ... This village located in the Val di Pecora very close to Piombino was almost entirely rebuilt in 1810 by the generosity of the Baciocchi princes, and raised to a much more flourishing condition than it was in the past...out of gratitude for such a pronounced benefit, [the population] wanted to offer the August Foundress a monument that would pass on an everlasting memory of her to posterity. Therefore in 1811 the engraving of the medal in question was commissioned to the burin of Galle ... Because the narrow confines of a small town do not require numerous impressions of this medal [to be struck], it has become so rare that its possession is desired by the most diligent collectors.



Figure 2 The Location of Montioni (or ‘Montone’) is at the dropped pin.
(Image courtesy of Google Maps)

<https://goo.gl/maps/WBd2uVEMReurna9B6>

The original error made by Millin & Millingen in attributing the commemorative purpose of the ‘Montone’ medal to the building of a new road is probably simply due to confusion and coincidence: *confusion* because there are a number of small towns in Italy with names very similar in spelling to ‘Montone’ and *coincidence* because one of these towns (*Montione*) happens to lie close to a very famous road built by Princess Elisa, the highway from Lucca to Pisa (1809).⁴ The reason Millin & Millingen associated this road with the ‘Montone’ medal is likely two fold.

Firstly, Princess Elisa was internationally renowned, especially in England, as the ‘Semiramis of Lucca’ because she actively, conscientiously, and competently governed

⁴ The town of *Montone*, near Perugia was never within Elisa’s territories while *Montione* near Pisa, *Montaione* southwest of Florence, and *Montioni* near Piombino all were. In Italian ‘Montone’ (pronounced: mon-tó-ne) means ‘mutton,’ ‘ram,’ ‘sheepskin,’ or ‘sheepskin jacket’ but can also mean a ‘rock rounded by the action of glaciers’ (cf. Oxford Languages). This may explain the origins of the names of *Montone* and *Montaione*, which are both villages on a hilltop, as well as *Montioni*, which lies in the Val di Pecora (Valley of the Sheep).

her territories.⁵ She was lauded for the introduction of numerous beneficial public works, innovations, and improvements. One of these ‘works’ was the road from Lucca to Pisa, which joined the major seaport of Livorno to Lucca, through Pisa. Though only short in distance, it was much celebrated due to its revolutionary effect upon trade, commerce, and communication in the region.

Secondly, this road was deemed of such importance to the Napoleonic Empire that it had been commemorated in 1809 by another medal in the *Napoleonic Series*, this time engraved by Andrieu and Brenet (Figure 3). The reverse of this medal features the Roman goddess Vibilia, goddess of journeys and travelling, lying on the road at the foot of a Roman mile-stone, the base of which resembles in a generic sense the base of the commemorative column on the reverse of the ‘Montone’ medal.



Figure 3 Reverse of the Road from Lucca to Pisa Medal (1809). Bramsen 774; Julius 1983; TN 28, 7. (Image courtesy of Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Paris <https://www.parismuseescollections.paris.fr/fr/petit-palais/oeuvres/la-princesse-elisa-bonaparte-0#infos-principales>)

This medal, and the important new road it celebrates, which runs close to *Montione* near Pisa, explain why Millin & Millingen (incorrectly) assert that the ‘Montone’ medal commemorates the “...opening [of] a new road in 1809” by Princess Elisa. It would have been easy for Millin & Millingen, writing only a decade after this important event - and given the few interpretive clues available to them on the ‘Montone’ medal itself - to simply assume that it was the residents of *Montione* on the outskirts of Pisa who were commemorating Elisa and to further assume that it was for her role in building the famous Lucca to Pisa road from which the inhabitants of *Montione* would have directly benefited, and which was therefore in a sense the ‘making’ of their small town.

⁵ It was Napoleon’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Talleyrand who first called Elisa the ‘Semiramis of Lucca’, referring to the mythical wife of the Assyrian King Ninus, who succeeded him to the throne. Her name became a by-word for glorious and successful rule. Throughout antiquity, almost every monument of unknown origin near the Euphrates River was ascribed to her.

Scargill (1820) took Millin & Millingen's attribution at face value and elaborated on it further by directly articulating the resemblance of the column illustrated on the reverse of the Bramsen 1139 'Montone' medal to a mile-stone along the Lucca-to-Pisa Road – as illustrated on Bramsen 774.

The connection of this town with Carrara, as mentioned by Millin & Millingen is more obscure. In 1806 Napoleon had given his sister the additional territories of Massa and Carrara, having withdrawn them from the Kingdom of Italy. Along with the Principalities of Piombino and Lucca previously awarded to Elisa in 1805, and the awarding of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in 1809, this created a contiguous realm for Elisa, composed of Tuscany, Piombino, Lucca, and Massa and Carrara. The connection therefore may simply be due to the fact that the *Montione* near Pisa is the closest small town of that name to Carrara (about 65 km), another site where Elisa's visionary governance was internationally known to have produced beneficial effects. There she established the *Accademia di Belle Arti di Carrara* and encouraged sculptors such as Antonio Canova (1757-1822) to visit and work. Their presence simultaneously stimulated the marble industry, and created an export trade in Carrara marble statues to the rest of Europe.

The reason Galle's 'Montone' medal continues to be misinterpreted in the numismatic community may be that its true commemorative purpose can only be found in old and obscure Italian and French publications (Massagli, 1870; Marmottan, 1901). As a result, it seemed appropriate to bring this information to the attention of the international numismatic community by documenting it here in English for the first time, and setting it in its historical context, so that this rare medal's meaning, import and value might be better appreciated and correctly documented by dealers and collectors of the *Napoleonic Series*.

Historical Background

Further investigation confirms that 'Montone', rather than being the *Montione* near Pisa is instead the obscure and isolated former alum-mining village of *Montioni* in the Maremma region, about 80 km southwest of Florence and about 20 km northeast of Piombino, in the *comune* (municipality) of Suvareto. Niccolò Machiavelli records in his *History of Florence* (1532) that alum was first discovered in this region of Italy in the 15th century, with the mineral previously known only to occur naturally in Italy in the Papal States at Tolfa, west of Rome; in the Kingdom of Naples, at Agnano; and on the Island of Ischia. This discovery was so valuable to the economy of the region that disputes over mining rights between Florence and Volterra (mischievously inflamed by Lorenzo de' Medici, who sought complete control of the Italian alum industry) led to the sack and subjugation of Volterra in 1472 by Florentine mercenaries commanded by the *condottieri* Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino.

The importance of alum to European economic history can be appreciated by the fact that possession of the Tolfa mines boosted the annual income of the Papal States by 20% (Günster & Martin, 2015). At the time, alum played a crucial role in numerous essential industrial processes, such as paper-making, food preparation, and tanning, and served as a mordant to set the colors into textiles. Its value led to alum mining at Montioni and at other nearby sites being curtailed throughout the Renaissance due to the Popes' monopolistic policy with regard to the Tolfa mines, abetted by their cartel

with the King of Naples (Günster & Martin, 2015). Mining was further reduced by the late 18th century due to the discovery of artificial alum by the French chemist Jean-Antoine Chaptal in 1788. Nonetheless, alum mining, carried on in favourable conditions, could still retain a viable and lucrative place in the Italian economic system, particularly at Montioni, where costs were low and the port of Follonica was close by, so that the refined alum could easily be transported by camels from the mines to the port; all it required was a wise and far-sighted ruler like Elisa to put it back into full production, which she did in 1810.

The social and economic impact of Elisa's 'founding,' or at least her rejuvenation, of Montioni and its alum mine (*Allumiere di Montioni*) cannot be overstated. It lay in a remote, rocky, and forested region, with limited agricultural and industrial potential, depopulated of male workers, and otherwise provided few economic opportunities for its inhabitants. The true purpose of Galle's 'Montone' medal, therefore lies in its commemoration of an enlightened ruler's sudden infusion of hope and economic vitality into a severely impoverished community, making both the Maremma region less poor, and Tuscany more wealthy. With Elisa providing the funding, property, plant, equipment, technicians and professional managers to make the *Allumiere di Montioni* a viable and profitable operation, she enabled it to continue producing alum right up until 1938.

At Montioni, Elisa employed the French entrepreneur Louis Porte (1779 - 1843) as the administrator of the mine and in 1811, the year our medal was struck, he was appointed its director (Paperini, 2021). At the village, renamed *Elisa Montioni* in her honour, and consistent with her progressive, rationalist style of governance inherited from her brother Napoleon, the Princess established a model farm to experiment with new crops and advanced methods of agriculture, including a five-acre vineyard planted with French varietals, including those from Bordeaux and Champagne. Elisa's revolutionary ideas extended to the cultivation of cotton, for which purpose she brought experienced workers from as far away as The United States of America (MiC, 2017).

To design the necessary buildings for the four hundred or so seasonal workers, Elisa engaged the French architect, Pierre-Théodore Bienaimé (1765-1826), a former student of Julien-David Le Roy, the architect who inspired Jacques-Germain Soufflot's neoclassical design for the *Panthéon* in Paris. Bienaimé, who was brought to Italy by Elisa, had already been employed by the Baciocchi to renovate the *Villa Marlia* in Capannori, purchased by Elisa as a royal residence when Napoleon appointed her Princess of Lucca and Piombino in 1805.

Bienaimé's buildings at Montioni included accommodations, workshops, stables, and warehouses for the miners, workmen, coachmen and woodcutters, with furnaces to prepare the alum, a Palazzina for Elisa – which later became the director's residence – and a spa for Elisa's personal use, which tapped the sulphurous mineral waters flowing at 31° Celsius from two natural thermal springs (Paperini, 2021). At the spa, Elisa used two Roman-style marble bathing tubs, carved in the workshops of the sculptor Antonio Canova. Both still exist - one in the courtyard of the Villa Granducale in Follonica, the other in front of the entrance to Napoleon's former residence-in-exile on the Island of Elba, the Palazzina dei Mulini in Portoferraio.

Bienaimé did not neglect to provide a village piazza at Montioni, where there remains to this day a cistern in the form of a squat Egyptian obelisk to collect rainwater for the

Palazzina, and an adjacent neoclassical column made from Carrara marble, dedicated to Elisa (Figure 4).⁶ This is the column engraved by Galle on the reverse of the current medal.



Figure 4 The Column and Cistern in the Piazza at Montioni (Image courtesy of Archivio Parchi Val di Cornia www.parchivaldicornia.it)

The column at Montioni is set on a square stone base, three of whose faces are decorated with bas-relief tablets. The first tablet, facing the cistern, carries the “displayed eagle” emblem of the Napoleonic Empire in a similar format to that portrayed on the column of the reverse of our medal, however, differing slightly in that the eagle faces left, not right, and the wings are open but the tips are not fully extended. An inscription above the eagle reads: “NAPOLEON

EMPEREUR ET ROI” (i.e., “NAPOLEON EMPEROR AND KING,” Napoleon being King of Italy as well as Emperor of the French). The second tablet depicts Elisa’s profile facing right in a portrait similar to the obverse of our medal but with a different hairstyle and diadem. The third bas-relief carries the arms of the Baciocchi family.

Galle’s portrait of Elisa was first used two years earlier (1809) for the obverse of the Academy of Lucca prize medal (Bramsen 911; Julius 2205; TN 35, 9). Strangely, the inscription, ‘Duchess of Lucca and Piombino,’ was not updated on the ‘Montone’ medal (1811) to include Elisa’s superior title, ‘Grand Duchess of Tuscany,’ given to her by Napoleon in 1809. This suggests the ‘Montone’ medal was inexpensively ‘cobbled-together’ from the existing obverse die and a simple and easily-engraved reverse (inscription and architectural column). The plan for the reverse would easily have been supplied to Galle by sending him Bienaimé’s architectural design for the Montioni column.

The dedication on the Montioni column is conspicuously different from that of the medal. It ignores Elisa’s husband Prince Felice Baciocchi altogether, with the designer of the column Bienaimé instead making a play on the meaning of his own name, so as to both flatter Elisa and simultaneously memorialize himself: “A NOTRE BIEN AIMÉE SOUVERAINE” (i.e., “TO OUR BELOVED SOVEREIGN”). Above the portrait of Elisa, chiseled into the upper face of the column is “COMUNE DI ELISA MONTIONI” (i.e., “MUNICIPALITY OF ELISA MONTIONI”) while, on the middle face of the column is “MINE D’ALUN” (i.e., “ALUM MINE”) and on the lower face is: “TOUT FUT CRÉÉ PAR SON GÉNIE” (i.e., “EVERYTHING WAS CREATED BY HER GENIUS”).

⁶ A brief tour (in Italian) of the piazza at Montioni by the historian Marco Paperini (2021) is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFTDY2yljFc> (downloaded: 01/23/2022)

Note the clever double-entendre connecting two of the lines of the dedication, which taken together can be read *either* as “EVERYTHING WAS CREATED BY HER GENIUS... TO OUR BELOVED SOVEREIGN” or “EVERYTHING WAS CREATED BY HIS GENIUS...TO OUR BIEN AIMÉE SOVEREIGN”. Both are possible interpretations because the French third person singular possessive case adjective ‘*son*’ which must be used with a masculine noun (in this case ‘*génie*’) can simultaneously mean *his*, *her*, or *its*. On the medal, any reference to Bienaimé is definitively removed, to be tactfully replaced instead, by a faint reference to Elisa’s husband.

We do not know who commissioned the medal from Galle, although we do have a likely suspect with the motive as well as the business acumen to cheaply produce a flatteringly attractive medal. In 1811, the year the medal is dated, Louis Porte, the administrator of the Montioni alum mine was made director and moved into Elisa’s Palazzina (Bonesprit, 2011), from where he reported directly to the Baciocchi princes. Possibly the medal was commissioned by Porte as a token of gratitude to his generous benefactress Elisa, using Bienaimé’s column as the reverse image to clearly identify Montioni. Politically, Porte would have been ill-advised to include the (French) architect in the medal’s dedication, or to exclude Elisa’s husband Felice. Felice was ‘technically’ Prince of Lucca and Piombino even if he was purposely left devoid by Napoleon of any political power, which always rested firmly in Elisa’s hands.

With her brother Napoleon’s first abdication in 1814, Elisa was forced to relinquish her Italian territories. She eventually retired to a country villa in Cervignano, near Udine, Italy where she died in 1820 aged 43 years. After Elisa’s fall, Louis Porte was dismissed, the alum mines were closed and rented to a Swiss named Etienne Richard. Leopold II, the restored Grand Duke of Tuscany, re-opened the mines during his reign (1824-1859) and they continued to produce alum throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th. In 1856, Leopold ordered the renovation and re-opening of Elisa’s thermal baths (‘*terme*’) at Montioni to attract tourists but this lasted only five years. After this time Bienaimé’s buildings gradually fell into disrepair and decay, although some have been stabilized and can be visited today in the Montioni Nature Park.⁷

The ‘Montone’ medal can be found in both bronze and silver. In 1870, Massagli estimated the rarity of the ‘Montone’ medal in silver as ‘RR’ (very rare). Currently, the Italian numismatic dealers Varesi rate a bronze exemplar as ‘molto rara’ (i.e., very rare, RR); while Moruzzi rates a silver exemplar as ‘RRR’ (i.e., ‘rarissima’ or ‘particularly rare’). The Paris Mint catalogue (1833) does not offer the medal for sale, indicating it did not possess the dies; however, the 1843 Paris Mint catalogue does, noting that the dies were owned by the ‘publisher’ of the medal, who may have been André Galle (1761-1844), given he was still alive at that time. Collectors should be alert, therefore, to the possibility of post-1843 restrikes, which will be readily identifiable by the usual Paris mint privy marks, rather than the plain edge of an ‘original’ strike.

⁷ Parco Naturale de Montioni at <https://www.parchivaldicornia.it/parchi-naturali/parco-naturale-di-montioni/> (downloaded: 06/10/2022)

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Inhabited Initials in Two Medieval Coins

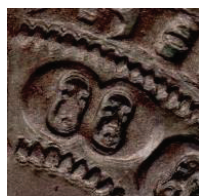
Michael Ross, NI # 2845



The pair of images at left are of a Metz city coinage silver Gros, issued after 1380. The pair at right are of a silver Gros of the Duchy of Luxembourg issued by Josse of Moravia during his first reign between 1388 and 1402. The two coins share temporal and geographic proximity – and they also appear to be the work of a single die engraver whose hallmark is the inclusion of small faces in the letters “O” on the obverse of the



Metz coin and letters “O” and “M” on both sides of the Luxembourg issue. The inspiration clearly hearkens back to centuries of practice in illuminated manuscripts of incorporating figures – faces, human forms, animals, and fantastical creatures – into the large,



decorative historiated (with a narrative element) or inhabited (no narrative element) initials at key points of the text.



Eid-Mar Aureus
Numismatica Ars Classica



M. Junius Brutus with L. Plaetorius Caestianus. Aureus, mint moving with Brutus in Northern Greece 43-42, AV 7.84 g. BRVT IMP – L·PLAET·CEST Bare head of M. Junius Brutus r. Rev. Pileus between two daggers; below, EID·MAR. Babelon –. Sydenham –. Sear Imperators 215. H. Cahn, *Actes du Congrès International de Numismatique*, Paris 1953, p. 213 (this coin) = H. Cahn, *Q. Tic 18*, 1989, 24a (this coin). Calicó 58 (this coin). RBW –. Crawford –. Biaggi 39 (this coin). Of the highest rarity, only three specimens known, of which this is the only one with a documented provenance prior to World War II. A coin of tremendous fascination and one of the most important objects to have reached us from antiquity. A scratch on reverse field and carefully pierced at twelve o'clock, possibly to be worn by a supporter of Brutus, otherwise very fine Ex NAC 27, 2004, 282 and NAC 45, Barry Feirstein, 42 sales. From the Biaggi collection (privately purchased from Cahn in February 1952). This coin has been on display at the British Museum in London from 2010 to 2021 Every collector of ancient coins knows that the silver EID MAR denarius struck by M. Junius Brutus to celebrate the assassination of Julius Caesar on the Ides of March is the king (or rather, king-slayer) of Roman Republican coins. Due to the history that drips from them like the blood of the murdered dictator, such coins are highly sought after and invite great competition by collectors. This gold EID MAR aureus, however, is on another level entirely. While the denarius is a rarity, the aureus is spectacularly rare, known from only three specimens. The present aureus has been known since at least 1932, when it was offered to the British Museum by Oscar Ravel, but the deleterious economic effects of the Great Depression and the recent end of the gold standard in Great Britain prevented its purchase by the museum at that time. This is well documented by a cast of the coin conserved at the museum. In 1953, Herbert Cahn discussed the coin in his presentation of “The Aureus of Brutus with EID MAR” at the Paris International Numismatic Congress. He also included it (Cahn 24a) in the corpus of 52 EID MAR coins published in *Quaderni ticinesi* in 1989 although Michael

Crawford had questioned its authenticity in *Roman Republican Coinage* (1975). In the intervening years, any doubts have faded and even Michael Crawford confirmed its authenticity. The coin has been publicly displayed at the British Museum in the main gallery from 2010 to 2021. The long-term loan of the coin to the museum to some extent assuaged the wound of the missed opportunity in 1932 and the discovery that the only EID MAR aureus in the BM collection (donated by King George IV in 1825) is actually a forgery. Over the more than a decade that the present EID MAR aureus has spent under the care of the British Museum, it has also taken up an acting career. It appears in a filmed version of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in which Brutus speaks his soliloquy through the coin. Alas, there is no category for "Best Coin" in the Academy Awards. Like the silver EID MAR denarius, the matching gold aureus is believed to have been struck by a mobile military mint travelling with Brutus and his army as he marched from Asia Minor into Macedonia in the autumn and early summer of 42 BC. Earlier in the year he had joined his fellow assassin L. Cassius Longinus at Smyrna and together set about campaigning and plundering in order to raise funds and attract soldiers for the imminent showdown with Octavian and Mark Antony, the heirs of Caesar. The coins were struck from the gold and silver looted from the cities and temples of Asia Minor in preparation for the coming Battle of Philippi (3 and 23 October 42 BC) that would settle the fate of the Republic once and for all and set the trajectory of European and wider Mediterranean history for centuries to come. While the silver denarius was the standard coin in which soldiers expected to be paid in the late Roman Republican period, the gold aureus was special. Under the Roman Republic gold was not struck to be used as regular coinage but was produced either to meet emergency (usually military) expenses or as a special gift or bonus given to military commanders. Under the Roman Empire, the distribution of gold coins as *donativa* by the emperors became commonplace to affirm the loyalty of the army. The EID MAR aurei had a similar purpose and may have been distributed by Brutus himself to his commanders as both a reminder of what they were fighting for and as a means of cementing their loyalty. The hole pierced through the present EID MAR aureus just above the head of Brutus indicates that it was worn as a pendant and the British Museum in its press release suggested that it might have been given to a commander who survived the Liberators' defeat at Philippi, but continued to cherish the memory of Brutus and what he stood for even after the victory of the Triumvirate was complete. One can almost imagine the owner secretly wearing the coin on a necklace hidden under his tunic to remain mindful of Brutus and the ideals he stood for as the Republic continued its death throes and lurched ever closer to the tyranny of Empire. It is more than a little ironic that at the same time Brutus celebrates the murder of the dictator on the EID MAR coinage, he also features his own portrait on the obverse. Julius Caesar was in fact the first Roman leader to break the old Republican custom of never depicting the image of a living person on the coinage. Ruler portraits on coins were previously deemed to be the stuff of kings and were anathema to republican principles. Thus, the reverse of the EID MAR coinage simultaneously recalls the killing blows that seemed to offer the salvation of the Republic from Caesar while the obverse portrait pressed its own dagger into the heart of Roman Republican tradition. Despite what Brutus and his fellow conspirators may have hoped, there really was no possibility of returning to the good old days. From an art historical perspective, the portrait on the EID MAR coinage is also important as it is one of the only securely identifiable images of the great liberator that we have. His only other certain portraits occur on the far less

famous aurei struck by Servilius Casca and Pedanius Costa (Crawford 506/1 and 507/1). His image on the EID MAR coinage is notable for the light beard that Brutus wears—a feature absent from his portrait on the Casca and Costa issues. It has sometimes been suggested that this beard was a sign of mourning for the Republic, but this seems unlikely since until he believed himself defeated at the battle of Philippi, there is no indication in the ancient sources that he thought it was truly dead. More probable, the beard is the outward sign of a vow taken to defeat the heirs of Caesar and restore the Roman Republic. Unfortunately, Brutus did not live to fulfil the vow and take up his razor. The beautiful simplicity of the EID MAR reverse served to encapsulate and advertise the ultimate cause for which Brutus and the Liberators were fighting on the very eve of the Battle of Philippi. Presumably it was hoped that such iconography and the unambiguous legend would serve to rally the army before the fateful battle. A single pileus—the symbol of freedom from slavery worn by freedmen in Rome and the regular attribute of the goddess Libertas—stands in the centre of the type flanked by two daggers. The latter obviously refer to the murder of Caesar that made possible the liberty represented by the pileus, but the fact that there are two daggers had led to the suggestion that each weapon was intended to represent Brutus and Cassius. The daggers have also been thought to represent the restoration of the power of the traditional Roman consulship, which placed power in the hands of two men, in opposition to the monarchical dictatorship of Caesar. The crystal clarity of meaning of the EID MAR reverse type was very powerful and continued to exert its influence under the Roman Empire and down to modern times. The type was resurrected by Galba in Spain at the beginning of his revolt against Nero in the spring of 68 AD (RIC 24). In this case it did not advertise a *fait accompli* as had Brutus' original, but rather served as a call to arms against the debauched emperor and a promise of liberation from tyranny. Evidently Galba had glossed over the fate of Brutus after Caesar was dead. Following his defeat at Philippi, Brutus gave up hope of continuing the struggle against the Triumvirate and fell on his sword. Brutus' type was still known in the early third century AD, when the historian Cassius Dio described it for readers of his Roman History—one of the very few times when a specific coin is mentioned in ancient literature. He noted that, "Brutus stamped upon the coins which were being minted his own likeness and a cap and two daggers, indicating by this and by the inscription that he and Cassius had liberated the fatherland." (47.25.3). To provide such detail Dio must have seen one himself or had access to an earlier source written by someone who had seen one. Although the memory of Brutus' famous type may have faded with the fall of Rome and the coming of the Middle Ages, it was remembered again with the flowering of the Renaissance and the new interest in Roman coins that came with it. In the sixteenth century the EID MAR type was reused for bronze medallions struck to commemorate Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco (Attwood 891). In 1537, his grandson Lorenzino plotted the murder of his cousin, Duke Alessandro de' Medici of Florence, in the empty hope of restoring the Florentine Republic. Like Brutus centuries before, Lorenzino was forced to flee and was ultimately killed. Like Galba before him, he seems to have fallen under the spell of the coin type and the image of the Liberator that it evoked without paying close attention to the conclusion of Brutus' story. The EID MAR type was also invoked in the context of the French Revolution (1789-1799). An article discussing the bonnet rouge worn by the Revolutionaries in issue no. 141 of *Révolutions de Paris* (17-24 March 1792) directly connects the French liberty cap with the pileus of Brutus' type seen on a "superb gold coin" in the cabinet

of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève. The aureus in question seems to have disappeared after the collection was nationalized and dispersed by the Revolutionary government in 1791. The purpose of the author seems to have been to associate the emblem of French freedom more closely with tyrannicide, although at the time of publication Louis XVI still lived and France maintained a tenuous constitutional monarchy. There was no French Brutus until 1793, when the National Convention convicted the king of treason and ordered his execution. In addition to his subtly radicalizing use of the EID MAR type in the pages of *Révolutions de Paris*, the author of the article also points out the extreme rarity of the EID MAR aureus by noting that even the personal collection of Louis XVI lacked such a coin. The power and influence of Brutus' EID MAR type, especially as found on the gold aureus, cannot be overestimated. It is a type for all time that has spoken, and continues to speak, to the hearts of many in ages when people have felt oppressed and longed for freedom. The coin is more than a physical memorial of the tumultuous act undertaken by Brutus and his colleagues on the Ides of March, 44 BC, and its doomed sequel at Philippi two years later. It encapsulates the dream of liberty that reverberates in modern times just as much as it did over 2,000 years ago. Is it any wonder that its original Roman owner desired to wear it close to his heart?

This coin was offered by Numismatica Ars Classica in their Auction 132, Lot 474 on 31 May 2022. The presale estimate was 750,000 Swiss Francs but it sold for 2,200,000 Swiss Francs when the spirited bidding was completed. – editor.

NI

Finest Certified British West Indies Proof 1/2 Dollar
Heritage Auctions, HA.com



British Colony. George IV Proof "Anchor Money" 1/2 Dollar 1822/1 PR65 NGC, KM4, Br-857, NC-1A2. 1822/1 overdate. A superb gem example of this rare type demonstrating cascading watery brilliance over surfaces dressed in metallic tones infused with touches of gold and golden-brown. ...

In the early 1820s the British government began the production of coins representing fractions of the Spanish-American dollar. Silver fractional coins of 1/16 to 1/2 dollar were struck in 1820 for Mauritius and in 1822 for Mauritius and Barbados. In 1826 the Anchor Money in Mauritius was withdrawn and shipped to the West Indies. Since there was important trade between the West Indies and Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, it can be assumed that some Anchor Money entered Canada through trade, though there were no direct importations.

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Book Review: *Copper Coins of Muscat and Oman dated AH 1311–1316 (1893–1899 CE) by Scott E. Cordry*

By Wolfgang Schuster

Copper Coins of Muscat and Oman

(dated AH 1311-1316 / 1893 – 1899 CE)



Scott E. Cordry

Towards the end of the 19th century maritime trade between the major ports of the north-western Indian Ocean (Zanzibar, Aden, Muscat, Karachi and Bombay) greatly increased. When in 1889 the Bombay Mint ceased the production of all copper coins, the flow of popular British India coppers to Oman was interrupted and the Omani sultan undertook to mint his own coinage from 1893 to 1899 with the mint name Muscat.

Consequently, ¼ Anna copper coins of Muscat and Oman circulated around the north-

western Indian Ocean as regional small change. During these few years, numerous ¼ Anna coins with a range of varieties of legends, decorative elements and die mulings, as well as countermarks, were struck.

With the introduction and use of modern colonial and national currencies in the 20th century, the wide circulation of ¼ Anna copper coins, Maria Theresa Thaler and Indian Rupee coins slowly fell out of use. Until 1940, the Maria Theresa Thaler and Indian Rupee remained the main currencies circulating in Muscat and Oman. During all that time, copper ¼ Anna coins of Muscat and Oman continued to be used as small change.

Even today we might come across a good number of ¼ Anna coins including crude contemporary forgeries (some cast) in antique and curio shops in the old souqs and markets of port towns of the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf and along the Swahili and

Somali Benadir coasts. As the coins were widely used until the early 1940s, most of those available are considerably worn and corroded.

The book gives comprehensive information on these copper coins of Muscat and Oman bringing to light all known varieties in a systematic presentation. After a preface by the author reflecting his passion for studying those issues, a detailed introduction follows, focusing on the historical and geographical background, use and importance of this 'Indian Ocean trade currency.'

The series of Muscat and Oman $\frac{1}{4}$ Anna copper coins spans across three generations of Omani rulers of the Al Bu Sa'id dynasty: Sultan Faisal bin Turki, Sultan Taimur bin Faisal, and Sultan Sa'id bin Taimur. Accordingly, all coins issued under the respective rulers are grouped and presented in separate chapters which open with a brief biography of the sultan, followed by a detailed chronological listing of all known coin dates and varieties with illustrations in full color and at 150% enlargement.

$\frac{1}{4}$ Anna coins come with variations in metrology. In practice, real weights from 4.70 g to 7.30 g are recorded, while diameters range from 24.8 mm to 26.7 mm. Coin flans normally have plain edges, rather often without raised rims; variations in thickness as well as mutually rotated dies are known. Alongside red copper, infrequent specimens in yellow copper (brass) are also encountered.

As we only find some $\frac{1}{4}$ Anna copper coins rather superficially covered in standard coin catalogs, the nearly eighty coin varieties presented in the book are identified by unique SC-catalog numbers as a reference for coin collectors, coin dealers and numismatists.

An appendix shows all listed coins with their SC-number and estimated retail prices in three conditions in US\$.

This first fully-illustrated work sheds light on a relatively complicated and complex series that up to now has not been researched in depth. Having cataloged and described dozens of varieties, this new catalog is a valuable reference to anyone wishing to explore the varieties and history of $\frac{1}{4}$ Anna copper coins of Muscat and Oman.

The book is available at www.arabiancoins.com. *New York 2021; Soft cover, 50 pages.*

The Twelve Caesars: Part 2 of 3

By John Stich, NI #2714

This is the next installment of the article which first appeared in the July/August 2022 issue of the *NI Bulletin*, illustrating pieces from the author's collection, along with providing background for each of the emperors - based on the text appearing in *Roman Coins and Their Values*, Volume 1, by David R. Sear. – editor.

Claudius (10 BC – 54 A.D.)



Obv.: TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG P M TR P IMP. Bare Head of Claudius left. Rev.: Minerva advancing right, brandishing spear and holding shield, large S C in field; otherwise anepigraphic. Copper As. 41-42 A.D. 27 mm. Sear 1861.

Tiberius Claudius Drusus was the younger son of Nero Claudius Drusus (brother of Tiberius) and Antonia, daughter of Mark Antony. He had some physical issues (probably some form of paralysis) and was ridiculed by family members. So, he devoted himself to scholarship, authoring histories of Etruria and Carthage.

Upon the assassination of his nephew Caligula, early in 41 A.D., Claudius was proclaimed emperor by the soldiers of the Praetorian Guard. Despite his disabilities, he proved himself to be a surprisingly competent ruler and even added to the territory of the Empire by the invasion and partial conquest of Britain. His marital affairs, however, were less fortunate. His third wife, Valeria Messallina, was notorious for her promiscuity and Claudius ordered her execution in 48 A.D. He then married his own niece, the younger Agrippina, and adopted her son, Nero, as his heir. Claudius' own son, Britannicus, was thus disinherited, presumably because of the disgrace of his mother, Messallina. Claudius died in 54 A.D., possibly by poisoning by his politically ambitious fourth wife. He was succeeded by Nero, who was the last of the Julio-Claudian emperors.

Nero (37 - 68 A.D.)



Obv.: IMP NERO CAESAR AVG P P. Laureate Head of Nero right with aegis on neck. Rev.: SALVS. Salus enthroned left holding patera (shallow bowl). Silver Denarius. 66-67 A.D. 18 mm. Sear 1945.

Originally named L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, he was the son of Domitius Ahenobarbus and Agrippina Junior, sister of Caligula. Later, when Agrippina married her uncle, the emperor Claudius, her son was adopted for the imperial succession and his name changed to Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus. Three years later, Claudius died under suspicious circumstances, and Nero became the fifth emperor of Rome.

In the early years of the new reign, political power was in the hands of wise counselors. Agrippina had quickly been deprived of the position of influence which she had hoped to occupy. But from 62 A.D. onward, the young emperor asserted his independence, and with the encouragement of dissolute companions, his behavior became increasingly erratic and unpredictable. In the summer of 64 A.D., a great fire laid waste to much of central Rome, and Nero, who was rumored to have been the author of the conflagration, eagerly took advantage of the opportunity to build a magnificent extension of the imperial palace, known as the "Golden House." He also fancied himself as a great artist, poet, and theatrical performer, and spent much time in Greece in the latter part of his reign. The Roman world eventually tired of his follies and revolts broke out in several provinces. Trouble arose initially in the East, where the outbreak of the First Jewish Revolt in 66 A.D. led to the appointment of the future emperor Vespasian as supreme commander in the area. Unrest soon spread to the western provinces and serious uprisings in Spain and Gaul led ultimately to the proclamation of Galba as emperor and the suicide of Nero in early summer of 68 A.D.

Galba (3 BC - 69 A.D.)



Obv.: IMP SER GALBA CAESAR AVG P M. Laureate Head of Galba right. Rev.: ROMA RENASCES. Roma standing left holding Victory and eagle-tipped scepter. Silver Denarius. 68-69 AD. 18 mm. Sear #2107.

Servius Sulpicius Galba, born of an aristocratic family and a favorite of Empress Livia in his youth, had a distinguished public career culminating as Governor of Spain during the latter part of Nero's reign. When Vindex, governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, rebelled against Nero in March 68 A.D., he invited Galba to join him and promised to support him as Nero's replacement on the imperial throne. Vindex soon died, but Galba had already committed himself to the revolt and Nero's suicide soon afterwards assured his success. Galba's reign was destined to be of short duration. He failed to gain popularity, principally because of his ruthlessness in implementing reforms and his notorious avarice. This caused a serious rift with the Praetorian Guard to whom he refused to pay a promised donation. His supporter in the revolt against Nero, M. Salvius Otho, had hoped to be adopted as his successor. But when Galba selected L. Calpurnius Piso as his heir in early January 69 A.D., the disgruntled Otho wasted no time in organizing a conspiracy of the Praetorians. Galba and Piso were both assassinated in the Forum on January 15, 69 A.D., their severed heads being taken to Otho in the Praetorian camp.

Otho (32 - 69 A.D.)



Obv.: IMP M OTHO CAESAR AVG TR P. Bare Head of Otho Right. Rev.: SECVRITAS P R. Securitas standing left. Silver denarius. 69 A.D. 18 mm. Sear #2162.

Marcus Salvius Otho was prominent in Roman society and became a close friend of the young emperor Nero. However, Otho's wife, the beautiful Poppaea Sabina,

attracted the emperor's attention and Otho found himself posted to distant Lusitania as governor (58 A.D.), an office which he retained for the following decade. Poppaea remained in Rome as Nero's mistress and in 62 A.D. became his second wife, though three years later she died as a result of a kick from her imperial husband. Otho thus had little reason to love his emperor and gave his enthusiastic support to Galba's revolt in 68 A.D. Disappointed in his hopes of being adopted as Galba's heir, Otho fomented disaffection amongst the Praetorian Guard and seized the throne in a coup d'état on January 15, 69 A.D. However, just two weeks earlier the Rhine legions had declared for Vitellius and the inevitable trial of strength between the two rival emperors took place within three months. Otho's army was routed in a battle fought near Bedriacum in northern Italy and he committed suicide on hearing of the defeat (April 17, 69 A.D.).

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Una and the Lion Five Sovereigns Noble Numismatics



1839 Proof Una and the Lion Five Sovereigns, Victoria, 1837-1901. S-3851, W&R 278 (R4,) L&S 17. 38.56g. Lettered edge DECUS ET TUTAMEN ANNO REGNI TERTIO in small, raised letters (in relief) with rose stops. The edge translates as an ornament and a safeguard in the third year of the reign. The broad rims display a characteristic cud between 10:00 and 12:00 on the reverse indicating a late die state. Other die markers in the obverse fields confirm the dies' later state. Wyon placed a decorative border on both sides with an egg and dart design which is also characteristic of this coin. Obverse - six complete scrolls to front fillet (ribbon) and 11 full leaves to rear fillet. The legend reads VICTORIA D:G: BRITANNIARUM REGINA F:D: - translates as Victoria by the grace of God, Queen of the Britains, defender of the faith. Reverse - struck en Medaille full-length figure of Victoria as Una facing left leading the lion with DIRIGE in legend and garter star on the shoulder. In the exergue, MDCCCXXXIX under which is W.WYON. R.A. The legend reads DIRIGE DEUS GRESSUS MEOS which translates as may the Lord direct my steps, and it is thought it might have been Queen Victoria's personal prayer. Choice deep cameo proof fully sealed brilliant fields, die break rim to paw, two dried moisture spots mentioned for accuracy, one of the finest known, as such of great importance, the gem of this collection, extremely rare.

